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27 October 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Director for Research and Reports

THROUGH: Chief, Economic Research, ORR

THROUGH: Chief, Industrial Division, ORR

FROM: Chief, Manufacturing Sectors Branch, D/I

SUBJECT: Recommendation for Publication of Unclassified Research Aid

1. It is recommended that Project No. 34.2473 (Comparison of Consumer Goods in the USSR and the US, 1958) be published as an unclassified research aid. This report, which is now being completed in St/P, is based on unclassified source material, largely officially reported statistics of the Soviet and US governments.

2. The announcement of the Seven Year Plan and Khrushchev's promise to surpass the US in per capita production of certain consumer goods has generated wide interest in comparing Soviet and US consumer goods production. This research aid supplies certain definitions of products which heretofore have not been readily available but which are basic to the comparison of consumer goods production in the two countries.

3. Attempts to compare Soviet statistics with US statistics of consumer goods often result in confusing and inaccurate conclusions. In one such example in the form of an article in the Christian Science Monitor of 24 April 1959, entitled "Soviet Statistics Pull Queer Antics," the author, Mr. Paul Wohl, reported "strange inconsistencies" in the data. The confusion resulted from a change in the basis of reporting—that is, instead of linear meter measure, the first quarter production figures for 1959 were reported in square meters. When the appropriate conversion factors (made available by the new data) were applied, it was found that the data in fact were quite consistent.

4. Thus it is believed that the information in this research aid will be of use not only to regular recipients of classified reports but also to numerous consumers outside the intelligence community.

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